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BRIEF MENTION

Creative Criticism: Essays on the Unity of Genius and Taste, by J. E. Spingarn (New York, Henry Holt & Co., 1917). Four essays are here brought together, of which three had previously appeared in print. The titles are (1) The New Criticism; (2) Dramatic Criticism and the Theatre; (3) Prose and Verse; (4) Creative Connoisseurship. There is added an appendix, "A Note on Genius and Taste," in which the author takes occasion to reply to Mr. John Galsworthy's criticism of the first essay. The attitude of mind represented in these essays is principally that of a turning away from accepted "laws" with an air of dissatisfaction and rebuke. The restraints and deficiencies of conventions are dismissed from approval in a manner that is designed to constitute a conclusive argument in favor of a thoroughgoing revision of procedure in literary composition and criticism. The attitude of the writer is, to put it in its best light, progressive; but "progressive" has present-day connotations of unrest and of prejudice and of a disregard of the teachings of history and world-experience, and these connotations unmistakably transpire thru the principal propositions here set forth with cleverness and in a manner that is entertainingly inconclusive. Professor Minto observes that "Thinking on any subject is generally done by halves or by bits, each of which as it comes into prominence fills the area of the whole truth,"—words that are applicable to much in present-day theory that reposes in the delusive belief that to name a process or a product "modern" constitutes a sufficient defense against the charge of indifference to history.

Mr. Spingarn's defense that literary art is not to be judged primarily with reference to accepted laws reminds one of what Hazlitt termed a "species of nominal criticism." Possibilities of "free" forms in poetry are projected into an assumed future, but these are not accredited by much, if by anything, in the demonstrated present. It is a method of reasoning that may be said, with Hazlitt's words in mind, to be based on an assumption of works that have never been written, that will probably never be written,—with the double advantage of saving the "hapless author the mortification of writing, and the reviewer the trouble of reading them." At all events, "free verse" has not yet been carried beyond the state of being only material for poetry, as Leigh Hunt would describe it,—raw material, in some instances of excellent quality but still not fashioned into the finished product. This negation, however, brings into clear relief two positive admissions, important

and undeniable: that there must be good judgment in estimating the quality of raw-material as such, and that the variety of forms into which it may be profitably fashioned is not restricted by a closed canon of inflexible tradition. But "the kinds" will persist. This is, in the terms of the biologist, merely the recognition of the persistence of the "species." An incomplete view shows the classification of poetry into "lyric, comedy, tragedy, epic, pastoral, and the like" to be a hindrance to the effective activity of the creative spirit; but the truth of literary history is not to be overthrown by a partial judgment. Mr. H. G. Wells has recently expressed the pertinent thought thus: "The species has its adventures, its history and drama, far exceeding in interest and importance the individual adventure." The degree of "interest and importance" may be determined from different angles. It is sufficient in literary history to note the guidance, control, and stimulation due to the recognition of "the kinds;" and it falls to the share of the new theorist to show that it is conceivable that the creative spirits of the future will achieve works of art without the aid of established technique, without regard to the grammar of their art, and in obedience to no other prescribed law or requirement except that the product be recognizable as a "spiritual creation."

Criticism, then, is to arrive at the point when it "clearly recognizes in every work of art a spiritual creation governed by its own law" (p. 26). "We have done with the *genres*, or literary kinds" (p. 26). "We have done with the theory of style, with metaphor, simile, and all the paraphernalia of Græco-Roman rhetoric" (p. 30). "We have done with all moral judgment of literature" (p. 31). "We have done with technique as separate from art" (p. 36). "We have done with the history and criticism of poetic themes" (p. 38). "We have done with the race, the time, the environment of a poet's work as an element in Criticism" (p. 39). "We have done with the 'evolution' of literature" (p. 40). "Finally, we have done with the old rupture between genius and taste" (p. 42). At this point the sub-title of the book is made clear: Criticism has only to ask, "What has the poet tried to express and how has he expressed it?" "How can the critic answer this question without becoming (if only for a moment of supreme power) at one with the creator? That is to say, taste must reproduce the work of art within itself in order to understand and judge it; and at that moment æsthetic judgment becomes nothing more nor less than creative art itself. The identity of genius and taste is the final achievement of modern thought on the subject of art, and it means that fundamentally, in their most significant moments, the creative and the critical instincts are one and the same."

The last statement is true in a sense that has never been denied. In this sense it has meant sympathetic reading and criticism, the reader's approximation to the state of mind in which the author must have composed his work (cf. *Mod. Lang. Notes*, xxxii, 316 f.). The sense in which the same statement may be metaphysically true, or at least helpfully interpretative of intuitive knowledge and processes, is so general in character as to blur the perception of Nature's rhetoric with its emphasis on "special endowments" and the perception of the ethical import of the parable of the pounds. Creative activity and sympathetic (or, let us say, creative) appreciation are indeed cognate, but experience demonstrates a difference between them that fixes the supremest values. If Arnold Bennett may declare that the creative artist is the best critic he must be understood to take special notice of this difference.

One cannot believe that Mr. Spingarn perceives a gain in minimizing the distinction between the original artist (the critic may, of course, create literature on the basis of the artist's work), the critic as the professional student and expositor of art, and the man of culture, with a degree of mere appreciation of art. Aptitude in any one of these three main departments of activity and experience gives in itself no assurance of possible success in another. And why disturb the accepted definition of useful words? Since Edmund Burke and Alexander Gerard, to take a late starting-point, 'taste' has meant rectitude of sentiment and judgment relating to objects of art; and Gerard added an *Essay on Genius*.

Nor can the question of "rules" and "kinds" be so lightly dismissed. As John La Farge puts it, "rules exist for art, not art for rules." Advances in art are made on the substratum of good sense and of a cultivated recognition of the past achievements of mankind. It is the dominant observation in La Farge's account of the art of Delacroix that in his realism he is "always recognisant of the past of art, of certain formulae of art." From the earliest of the Barbison artists to the dramas of Jacinto Benavente, no modern theory of art and of the appreciation of art has found footing in an attitude against evolutionary law, which works ineluctably from age to age.

These essays might lead one to suspect Mr. Spingarn of a serious purpose that is not made very clear to the casual reader. He knows that it is vain to set up a new idol in the market, and might, therefore, be supposed to "turn aside into pleasant controversies and discussions, and into a sort of wandering over subjects rather than sustain any rigorous investigation" (Bacon) so as to beguile his readers into discontent with an unreasoned acceptance of traditional theories and practice. His serious purpose is, however, positive enough in character; it is to advocate the æsthetic theory of Benedetto Croce, to whom the book is dedicated and under whose

banner Mr. Spingarn declares himself to be enrolled in all that he has here set forth (p. 23). That the zeal of the follower has led to something of a distortion of the master's doctrine will be suspected, and perhaps generously attributed to the 'form' of these essays, without pressing the author too closely with the question of the extent to which the traditional form or "rule" of a discourse has possibly determined both his method of reasoning and his manner of expression.

The connotations of the word 'creative' are being extended, and there are gains in doing this; but in the present connection there should be definite designation for the "degrees,"—a matter which Mr. Spingarn has tended to obscure, altho his profound understanding of it glints thru such a formula as "we do not learn language, we create it." Finally, the reader will be conscious of a regret that of persons most in need of it probably very few will become aware of the just censure and the helpful admonition of Mr. Spingarn's last essay, entitled "Creative Connoisseurship."

J. W. B.

The documents discovered by Mr. Charles Withall, around which Mr. Roger Ingpen has written his *Shelley in England* (Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1917), do not necessitate any radical alteration of the accepted views of Shelley's life but serve rather to shed new light upon facts already established. It must be a matter of opinion whether the story of Shelley's life till his departure from England had to be told anew or whether the new material could not have been published separately with a small commentary. Mr. Ingpen has been willing to rework familiar ground. The twenty-nine new letters by Shelley have to do almost entirely with his relations with his father and are supplemented by many letters that passed between Sir Timothy Shelley and his lawyer, William Whitton. It appears that the latter was more responsible than has hitherto been realized for the estrangement between Sir Timothy and his son, for the former followed his lawyer's advice unquestioningly and that advice was frequently harsh in the extreme. But if Sir Timothy was intolerant and arrogant, certainly (as Mr. Ingpen admits) the manner in which Shelley addressed him—criticising his actions and reminding him of his duty as a Christian—was not calculated to restore friendly relations between the two. See especially the letter of September 27, 1811 (I, 321 f.). Matters had reached a pretty pass when the poet had to send clandestinely the pathetic letter to his sister Hellen (now published for the first time), which fell into Sir Timothy's hands and found its way into the Shelley-Whitton collection of documents. The new material is most abundant during the period immediately

after Shelley's expulsion from Oxford and during the period between the elopement with Harriet and separation from her. Sir Timothy's perplexed and overwrought state of mind, as seen in his correspondence, reminds one of Carlyle's picture of the old Marquis of Mirabeau as he witnessed the career of his son: "Cluck, cluck,—in the name of all the gods, what prodigy is this that I have hatched? Web-footed, broad-billed; which will run and drown itself, if Mercy and the parent-fowl prevent not!" After he settled in Italy Shelley was cut adrift from his family and Mr. Ingpen offers little new information on this portion of his career. But the documents become once more voluminous after Shelley's death, when the question of the provision to be made for Mrs. Shelley and her son had to be settled. In this connection Mr. Ingpen publishes for the first time a letter from Byron to Sir Timothy in which he pleads in direct manly fashion for the widow and her infant. A letter to Leigh Hunt (part of which, though Mr. Ingpen does not note it, was published by Hunt long ago) shows Byron in a less attractive light; and the "noble poet" disappears from the narrative under the cloud of comparison with Trelawney. One should remember that when Mrs. Shelley came to introduce Byron into her novel *Lodore*, she recalled only the pathos and romance of his exile and painted a picture that errs on the side of generosity. Byron's appeal to Sir Timothy was unavailing and it was some years before Mrs. Shelley found herself in a position of financial comfort. Even then, it was to Sir Timothy's desire to have his son's name forgotten that was due the long delay before, in 1839, Mary Shelley issued her collected edition of her husband's poems. The texts of a number of documents referred to in his narrative are presented by Mr. Ingpen in a series of appendices. These have to do with Shelley's pecuniary difficulties before the final settlement with his father, with his relations with the Westbrooks, with his elopement with Mary Godwin, and with other matters. Most important is Appendix IX, where the record of the inquest on the body of Harriet Shelley is printed. This record apparently does not form part of the Shelley-Whitton mss. but its recovery is due nevertheless to Mr. Charles Withall. In the body of his book Mr. Ingpen has pieced together the tale of these "old, unhappy, far-off things" and has added as the most appropriate commentary the familiar and exquisite quatrain by Mr. William Watson.

To those who find delight in the bright lyrist but to whom appeals for money and the details of financial settlements are pretty dreary reading, the most interesting part of Mr. Ingpen's work will be the photographic facsimiles and careful transcriptions of the ms. note-book found by Captain Roberts in the ill-fated *Ariel* and now, for the first time, published by permission of Sir John C. E.

Shelley. This precious relic contains, besides a draft of the *Defence of Poetry* and some scraps of minor interest, nearly thirty stanzas of *Adonais*. Study of the fragments of stanzas, the false starts, the corrections and interlineations, and the skeleton rime-schemes left to be filled in later, shows how Shelley went about his work. Other evidence of this has been published before now, but the instances here offered are very striking. To take just one: in stanza xl, Shelley begins with the idea that *Adonais* "wakes"; then that "he has escaped out [of] this pit of worms"; then that "his spirit soon its silken" [meshes will abandon? (or some such idea)]; then comes the word "envy"; then some disconnected suggestions of the spirit's "twilight cradle wove of light" and clothing "the frozen world"; and then the significant line "He has outsoared the shadow of our night." Finally, after another unsatisfactory line, come the words "Envy and calumny." The poet has now grasped his idea and with but two interlineations and hardly a correction he writes the magnificent fortieth stanza—"He has outsoared the shadow of our night"—almost as it stands in the finished text.

S. C. C.

The two comedies edited as a text-book for students of Italian, by Emilio Goggio (*Due Commedie Moderne: O bere o affogare* di L. Di Castelnuovo; *Lumie di Sicilia* di L. Pirandello. Ginn and Co.), will not be easy reading for beginners. They are interesting, and are accompanied by a vocabulary which seems adequate; they are well and attractively printed (misprints noticed: 5, 8; 21, 20; and the cigarette of 21, 20 is hard to reconcile with the cigar of 21, 21 and 22, 6), but both depend for comprehension on the reader's understanding modern Italian habits of thought and expression typified in the persons of the plays. The unprepared reader would need copious and skilful notes, especially on the second play, the dialogue of which is almost entirely in elliptical sentences. But the notes here given are scanty and not always happily expressed, and some even of these are unnecessary, while a few are mistaken. Unnecessary, for example, are 3; 10, 11; 12, 14; 56, 9, and repetitions of rules of grammar such as 4, 19. *È proprio scritto* (19, 18) means 'Is it really decreed by fate?' not "is it gospel truth?" *le si toccano* (41, 31): *le* is not "pleonastic." *istà* (27, 20): the *i* before *s* impure is etymological, not "prefixed to avoid the combination of too many consonants." *Già tanto* (26, 21) means 'Anyhow,' and only implies a change of thought toward the matrimonial prospects of the speaker. *Un occhio di sole* (24, 16) is poorly translated by "a most beautiful girl." *Non può farne a meno* (77, 7) means 'she can't do without it' (or 'them'): the literal transla-

tion: "she can do no less (than it)" is inaccurate; *ne* possibly refers to *tanti signori*. A more idiomatic translation of 81, 19, is 'Say when.' Some of the notes are obscure: when both a literal and an idiomatic translation are given it will sometimes be difficult for the student to see what is the connexion between them: so in 31, 15; 33, 14, and 65, 5. This last ought to include a reference to the proverbial expression: *di ogni erba un fascio*. 6, 11 is painfully laborious.

There is an amusing naïveté about the "biographical notes" in which it is said that Castelnovo was "an ardent lover of his country, for which he had the greatest admiration"; that literature "always fascinated him"; that "politics as well as literature interested him very much," and that Pirandello "received a splendid education in Italy" before he went to study in Germany. The following note (21, 7) also has this quality: "Lucrezia romana: in Roman legend, Lucretia, the virtuous wife of Tarquinius Collatinus, was raped by Sextus Tarquinius, and, after enjoining her husband and father to avenge her dishonor, stabbed herself. She is regarded as a supreme type of pudicity, and is generally spoken of as 'Roman Lucretia' to distinguish her from modern ladies of the same name in whom (e. g. Lucretia Borgia) the same virtue is not always recognized."

J. E. S.

Euphuës: the Anatomy of Wit, Euphuës and his England. By John Lyly. Edited by Morris William Croll and Harry Clemons (London, George Routledge & Sons; New York, E. P. Dutton & Co., 1916. lxiv + 473 pp. Price 6s. net). This excellent book is the work of two Princeton scholars. The text (the first text of the *Euphuës* in modern spelling and punctuation) is edited by Mr. Clemons; the introduction and the notes are written by Mr. Croll. The introduction is a discussion of the sources of the Euphuistic rhetoric. Mr. Croll argues that it is not the product of humanistic imitation of the ancients, but a survival of the rhetoric of the schools. "The *schemata* of medieval Latin, revived by being translated into the popular speech, enjoyed a brief new career of glory." The notes gather up all that has been written in explanation or illustration of the *Euphuës* (by Messrs. Landmann, and Bond, and Feuillerat, and De Vocht) and add not a little that is new. They indicate a few new sources, in Alciati, and Thomas Lupton, and Gascoigne, and emphasize especially the importance of the proverb in Lyly's work. On p. 20, n. 2, the Greek text needs correction, and on p. 32, n. 2, 'obscuratus' should be 'obscuratur.' P. 61, l. 30, has 'Demophon' for 'Demophoon'; p. 171, l. 13, 'skake' for 'shake'; p. 358, n. 5, 'born blind' for 'born bald'; p. 431, n. 2, 'Aeneid vii' for 'Aeneid xii.'

W. P. M.